

SWOT Analysis

No matter how you approach strategic planning, a central part of your work is to analyze the environment in which your company operates. A SWOT analysis—SWOT meaning strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats—presents a simple structure for examining both your internal environment (strengths and weaknesses) and external environment (opportunities and threats). Post-It Notes are a great tool when conducting a SWOT analysis—whether you are working alone or with a strategic planning team. Post-It Notes also enable you to form groups of related ideas within each SWOT dimension. Use the space below to capture and then prioritize your ideas from the Post-It Note exercise that reflect the key environmental factors shaping your strategy.

Internal strengths: What does our organization do well?

Reflect on different dimensions of your organization (for example, communication, planning, performance management, culture, technology, the employees, leadership, reward systems, and organizational structure). Within these areas, where is your organization strongest? What are its assets? Of which aspects do you feel proudest?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Internal weaknesses: Where is our organization most vulnerable?

Reflect on different dimensions of your organization (for example, communication, planning, performance management, culture, technology, the employees, leadership, reward systems, and organizational structure). Within these areas, where is your organization most vulnerable? What are its weaknesses? What creates the greatest frustration for you and others?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

(continued on next page)

Job Aid

SWOT Analysis (continued)

External opportunities: What, in the outside environment, might enable our success?

Reflect on changes that are occurring in different dimensions of the external environment (for example, demographic, social, economic, technological, political, cultural, and market niche). Within these areas, what opportunities do you see occurring or emerging that, if you took advantage of them, would enable you to achieve your vision? What changes in the outside world could hold great promise for you—if you found a way to prepare for and respond to them?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

External threats: What, in the outside environment, might prevent us from achieving our vision?

Reflect on changes that are occurring in different dimensions of the external environment (for example, demographic, social, economic, technological, political, cultural, market niche, and so forth). Within these areas, what threats or challenges do you see occurring or emerging that, if you failed to address them, would prevent you from achieving your vision? What changes in the outside world could threaten your future—unless you find a way to prepare for and respond to them?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.